



230895

August 25, 2011

Honorable Daniel R. Elliot III, Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
AUG 31 2011
Part of
Public Record

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 35455
Wisconsin Department of Transportation Almena, Cameron, Rice Lake Rail Project

Dear Chairman Elliot,

I am contacting you today in support of a petition submitted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation asking for a declaratory ruling in relation to the Almena, Cameron, Rice Lake Rail Project. This is a critically important project and the communities involved in this request are counting on this to attract new businesses and grow their local economy but they are unable to move forward with those efforts until the Surface Transportation Board has issued the order requested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The project is part of an ongoing, long term effort by these communities to upgrade the area's transportation infrastructure and expand access to freight rail to the rural parts of Barron County. As part of that effort, the group secured state and federal funding for the purchase and rehabilitation of this line over three years ago, to go along with a considerable financial commitment made by the local governments themselves. With the funding in place, the initial phase of project is ready to move forward once the Surface Transportation Board acts.

Moving this project forward is essential to the economic future of these communities. The economy in rural Wisconsin has been hit hard by the recession and these communities are simply unable to attract new businesses to the area without making significant improvements to their infrastructure. By expanding access to freight rail and upgrading the existing lines, this project will give them a critical tool in attracting new businesses to the area and in helping existing businesses grow.

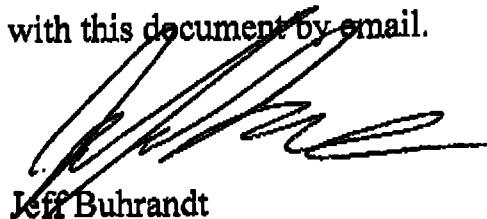
The State of Wisconsin has submitted similar applications in the past and it is my understanding that the initial concerns about this application voiced by the Surface Transportation Board have been addressed. With that in mind, I hope that the board will grant the petition put forth by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and help finally move this important project forward.

Sincerely,

Bob Jauch
State Senate

RE: Docket number FD-35-455

I hereby certify that I have served all parties of record in this proceeding with this document by email.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Buhrandt", written over the text "with this document by email." and partially over the name "Jeff Buhrandt" below.

Jeff Buhrandt

Office of Senator Bob Jauch

8/31/11